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As the amount of uncertainty and apprehension about the chaotic state of world mounts, so too do the tensions among the central characters of the novel. In this section of Don DeLillo’s *White Noise*, it becomes increasingly clear that the resigned acceptance that the adult characters so often displayed during times of distress is quickly beginning to fade away. As the novel progresses, it is evident that while they may try to ignore the impending troubles looming around the corner, the realities of life are making it increasingly difficult for these characters to continue living a facade.

A notable aspect of this section was the attitude shift of the adult characters. While the beginning of the novel shows them blissfully detached from the actualities of life, DeLillo uses this portion of the reading to show that such a level of disconnect from ones surroundings is not only impossible but also incredibly unhealthy. As seen when Babette exposes her secrets to Jack, the illusion of perfection that she displays to the community and within her home are merely a way for her to mask her inner fears and conflicts. The seemingly dedicated, hardworking wife falls into an affair in order to “do what I [Babette] had to do” (198) in order to obtain drugs to fight off her increasing fear of death. The sense of desperation is evident in her explanation of the affair. Although she has tried for so long to keep up the appearances of a domestic dynamo, she is beginning to falter under the pressure. Babette’s struggle is one of the first examples of a character that is not a child or an elder showing signs that the stresses of the time are wearing on her.

As is prone to happen within domestic settings, one person’s actions have a tendency to impact the lives of the entire family unit. Just as Babette comes to see that the world is not necessarily composed solely of the distractions and white noise that she chooses to surround herself with, so too does Jack find that his influence on his life is not the end all. Faced with his wife’s admission that she indeed does fear death and has hidden that fact from him, Jack shows that he cannot handle the reality of not having control of every detail of his life. As Babette attempts to explain to him her immense fear that drove her into going to such lengths to obtain the Dylar, Jack simply explains that “this is not a reasonable fear” (199), writing off his wife’s attempt to reach out to him in an honest way. He continues to try and convince her that death is not her real fear, making an attempt to gloss over the truth in an attempt to maintain his ideal life. However, it is clear that although Jack wishes for things to go a very specific way, that he is slowly losing control of his home and of his world as a whole.

Although he is reluctant to give up control, Jack’s world is slowly but surely slipping out of his control. DeLillo’s commentary on the desire of modern day Americans to simply tune out any unsavory information proves to be impossible throughout the story, and serves to foreshadow what will happen in later chapters.